

Town Council Meeting: 13 November 2006



Town of Garrett Park
PO Box 84
4600 Waverly Avenue
Garrett Park, MD 20896

Regular Meeting of Town Council
Garrett Park Town Hall
10814 Kenilworth Avenue
Garrett Park, MD 20896

MINUTES

Call to Order: Mayor Shawaker called the meeting to order at 8:00 PM. Present were Councilmembers Altar, Benjamin, Irons, Soltan, and Wegner. Also present was Administrator Pratt, Margaret Soltan of the *Bugle*, and a number of residents.

Approval of Agenda: The Agenda was approved as posted without objection.

Mayor Shawaker announced that twelve-year old resident Luke Carter-Shelp had been struck by a car and killed on Strathmore Avenue just before 6:00 PM that evening. Councilmember Soltan proposed the Council adopt the following statement:

The Mayor and Council of the Town of Garrett Park, meeting at 8:00 PM on Monday, 13th November 2006, speechless in the face of the tragedy that has just occurred on our streets, taking away from us Luke Carter-Shelp, age 12, wish for his family to know that our thoughts and prayers are with them, and that the Mayor and Council as individuals and as the Town's governing body, are ready to help in any way needed.

Councilmember Altar **MOVED**

That the Council adopts Councilmember Soltan's statement.
Councilmember Irons seconded the motion, which was **PASSED** unanimously,

Mayor's Report: Mayor Shawaker briefed the Council on what she knew of the accident, describing the effort to redirect traffic away from Town streets to avoid the possibility of another incident. A number of residents commented, as well.

Councilmember's Reports

- Councilmember Benjamin updated the Council on Capital Inventory and Program Project, reporting that VIEW Engineering, the Town's contractor, had been in Town assessing and measuring the roads, as weather permitted.
- Councilmember Soltan reviewed the working draft report of the Right of Way Committee with the Council and asked for any comments or suggestions to be sent to him.

Approval of Minutes: Councilmember Wegner **MOVED**

That the minutes of the Council Meeting on 10/09/06 be approved as corrected. Councilmember Benjamin seconded the motion, which was **PASSED** unanimously.

Mayor Shawaker suspended the meeting at 8:25 PM as a television news team had entered the Town Hall. The Mayor called the meeting back to order at 8:30 PM.

Variance Hearing: 8:30 PM: 11111 Rokeby Avenue: Expansion of living area in non-conforming structure – Mayor Shawaker reviewed the variance notice and recognized Setback Advisory Committee Chair Harry Gordon. Mr. Gordon presented the Committee's report and noted the Committee's support for the application. There was brief discussion, with the main point being that this should not be viewed as a precedent setting variance for similar situations, but that each case should be judged on the merits of the appeal. Councilmember Benjamin **MOVED**

That the variance be granted on the basis that there was *de minimis* change, no substantial impact on the Town, and the application conformed to the requirements of Section 403 of the Town Code of Ordinances. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Wegner and **PASSED** with Councilmembers Benjamin, Irons, Soltan, and Wegner voting "Aye" and Councilmember Altar voting "Nay."

Presentation: Emergency Preparedness – Resident Jennifer Sass made a presentation to the Council regarding the need for the Town to improve preparedness for emergencies. After an extended discussion, Ms. Sass agreed to take the lead in putting together a group of residents and work with the Citizen's Association to look into this issue.

Action/Discussion:

- Street Light Maintenance Issues – Mayor Shawaker reviewed her memo of 10 November regarding Town street lights with the Council. After discussion Councilmember Benjamin **MOVED**

That the Council adopt the option of contracting with a company other than Pepco for the maintenance of the Town street lights to the degree that the Town obtain bids, and that the Mayor proceed as necessary to do so. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Wegner and **PASSED** unanimously.

- Resolution Authorizing Negotiations with Pepco Regarding Ownership and Maintenance of Town Street Lights – After discussion it was the sense of the Council that a suitable resolution should be prepared and presented at the December meeting.
- Involvement in the Capital Inventory and Program Project – Councilmember Benjamin discussed with the Council how best to involve the Town and the Council in the development of the Capital Program. There was a need, he stated, for a group to review the information developed by VIEW engineering

and to make recommendations as to what the Town can afford and what are the Town's priorities. Councilmember Benjamin also raised the matter of a "wish list" of what the Town might want in terms of new infrastructure, what the priorities of such a list might be, and how to integrate them into the Capital Program. After discussion it was the sense of the Council that there should be two Council work sessions; the first to review and provide input on View Engineering data, expected to be ready in late December, and the second to work on the "wish list."

- Pedestrian Safety on Strathmore – Mayor Shawaker briefed the Council on her meeting with Captain Wayne M. Jerman, Commander of the Bethesda (2nd) District of the Montgomery County Police Department, and Officer Denise Gill, Community Policing Coordinator. A main topic of discussion at the meeting was the County Police volunteer program, one aspect of which trains citizens to observe traffic violations at pedestrian crosswalks, provide details to the police department, which then sends warning notices to the violators. There was extended discussion regarding this and other pedestrian safety issues, after which Councilmember Soltan **MOVED**

Be It Resolved:

1. Request an immediate meeting with the State Highway Administration (SHA) on the issue of pedestrian safety, including immediate activation of street lights on Strathmore and Knowles Avenues;
2. Support the Mayor's initiative to develop a local volunteer force to participate in the Montgomery County Police Department's program for monitoring traffic violations at pedestrian crossings; and
3. Urge SHA to improve lighting and pedestrian safety at crosswalks all along Strathmore and Knowles Avenues between the Rockville Pike and Beach Drive.

The motion was seconded by Councilmember Altar and **PASSED** unanimously.

Town Administrator's Report: Town Administrator Pratt reviewed the monthly financial report with the Council.

At 10:25 PM Councilmember Benjamin **MOVED**

That the Council goes into executive session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Altar and **PASSED** unanimously.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

[TOWN SEAL]

Edwin Pratt, Jr., Clerk-Treasurer